



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2014 AT 10.00 AM
MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY**

AGENDA

| Agenda Item | Page No |
|--|----------------|
| 1 Apologies for Absence | |
| 2 Declarations of Interest | |
| 3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 March 2014, to be confirmed | 3 - 8 |
| 4 Matters Arising | |
| 5 Rights of Way Group report Claire Hudson, Definitive Map Team Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access Advisor Joanne Taylor, Operations Team Leader | 9 - 18 |
| 6 LAF Members report | 19 - 22 |
| 7 Any Other Business | |
| 8 Date of Next and Future Meetings Wednesday 5 November 2014, 10am, Mezzanine 2, County Hall, Aylesbury | |



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2014, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.15 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr J Elfes, in the Chair

Mr N Harris, Mr C Hurworth, Mr A T A Lambourne, Mr J Coombe, Mr G Thomas, Ms N Glover and Mr R Pushman

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr J Clark, Mrs H Francis, Ms S Keene, Mrs C Hudson and Ms J Taylor

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr H Hancock

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Viv Lynch and Gavin Casperz.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Alan Lambourne declared an interest in Item 7 as Westcott Parish Council were involved in the Westcott Footpath Creation (point 39).

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2013 TO BE CONFIRMED

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013 were confirmed

4. MATTERS ARISING

Glyn Thomas updated members on the Watermead Footpath/Bridleway. He said that members would be aware that the grant had been returned to Natural England. Subsequently he said that the Forum should be aware that this now means that the Footpath/Bridleway which goes from Berryfields to Buckingham Park is now blocked off as it was planned for it to connect to Watermead. Glyn advised that BCC received £80k in Section 106 monies to use to build a Pegasus crossing across the A413 connecting Buckingham Park and Watermead. He raised concern whether the crossing would now be built and whether the monies would have to be returned to the developer.

Jonathan Clark advised that it was now a Highways issue. He said that if the crossing was built people did not have anywhere to go on the Watermead side unless a path was built. He said that any decision regarding the Section 106 monies and the crossing would be a Cabinet Member decision and that the LAF would need to lobby the Cabinet Member making the decision.

Chris Hurworth said that he believed the LAF should press for the crossing to be built. He said that the crossing would be advantageous at some stage in the future.

Shelia Keene commented that whilst she did not know presently whether the crossing would be built or not she believed there was a need to future proof a connection in due course even though there may not be a clear route at present.

The LAF agreed that BCC should try to retain the Section 106 monies and use the funding to build the crossing.

ACTION: Jonathan agreed to draft a letter for the Chairman.

5. THE EAST-WEST RAIL PROJECT

Charles Hurst, Network Rail was welcomed to the meeting.

Charles gave a presentation on the 'East-West Rail Project'. The key points were as follows:

- The project aims to upgrade the rail network between Bicester and Bedford
- There are 103 crossings to be considered across the whole of the route, 60 of which are in Buckinghamshire.
- The strategy for obtaining legal powers is being developed
- The East-West rail works in Claydon/Little Kimble areas are included in the HS2 Hybrid Bill
- Consent applications are to be drafted
- The Consortium can assist with the developing of the strategy and developing powers
- It is hoped that powers can be authorised within 20 months of submission
- It is not planned that the route will be electrified from Bletchley to Bedford due to issues such as:
 - Signalling capacity
 - Level crossings
 - Stations
 - Single Line Sections
 - Bedford Station
- Safety is always a concern and Network Rail has started a campaign with schools. The aim is to make parents and children aware of the dangers of fast crossings and what is involved when they consider crossing the line.
- Network Rail is adamant that the only safe crossings are those which are not at grade
- Vegetation clearance is taking place from Bletchley and Network Rail is trying to make people aware that they are trespassing on the line which

is difficult when they have been using the line for a number of years.

Charles then showed Members diagrams of some footpaths affected by the project and talked through possible solutions. The footpaths discussed included: Swanbourne, Winslow Footpath 17, Verney Junction and Steeple Claydon Road Crossing.

Charles advised that Network Rail had to apply for powers for East-West Rail before HS2 as if it was a stand alone scheme as this was needed before the HS2 Hybrid Bill would be passed.

Charles was congratulated on keeping the LAF informed and it was commented that it felt like genuine consultation.

Glyn asked Charles if the timeframe for the commencement of work was going to slip. Charles said that the timeframe has already slipped and said that the Transport Works Act provides Network Rail with powers such as: Closures, land take stations and road schemes. He said that landowners have the right at that point to have their views taken into account, although the approach of Network Rail has been to undertake negotiations before then. The Transport Works Act is a fallback position should negotiations reach an impasse.

The Chairman asked Charles whether the intention was to have no crossings at grade. Charles advised that Bedford to Bletchley would be within Control Period 6 (CP6) and that Network Rail was of the opinion that no crossings should be at grade where there is electrification. Charles said the CP6 related to the amount of funding provided.

Jonathan Clark provided Members with the plans for a pilot diversion and asked Members to feed back to him any comments.

6. THE DEFINITIVE MAP

Helen Francis and Claire Hudson gave a presentation on the work of the Definitive Map Team and highlighted the following key points:

Helen Francis and Claire Hudson are Senior Definitive Map Officers and deal with the following

- Definitive Map Modification Order Applications
- Complex Public Path Orders
- Town or Village Green Applications
- Complex enquiries

Hazel Rackman is a Definitive Map Officer and deals with the following:

- Public Path Orders
- Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders
- Public / Colleague Enquiries
- Commons and ROW Searches

Claire advised that the team have a statutory duty to maintain and keep up to date the legal record of all Public Rights Of Way in the County. She said that applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders can be made by anyone, applying for the map to be changed i.e. if a route has been used for 20 years or more but is not recorded on the map. The applications are investigated and determined – not establishing 'new' rights, but instead recording those that are alleged to exist.

Claire advised that they were also responsible for Public Path Orders. Helen talked

Members through a case study of a claimed footpath. Richard asked why health and safety was not a consideration when looking at the application. Helen advised that Officers would only look at whether rights existed or not. She said that health and safety is considered once it has been established whether rights existed.

Helen gave an introduction to Common Land and Town & Village Greens and explained the process for claiming a Town or Village Green.

Alan asked how often the Council used Section 26 of the 1980 Act. Claire said that there is a high threshold for proving a need and compensation is to be paid. She said that in most cases the officers would look to come to an agreement with the landowner.

7. RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT

Members had received the Rights of Way Group Report.

Helen Francis took Members through the Definitive Map Update and the following updates were noted:

- The Secretary of State has decided that the modifications are to be determined by written representation in relation to points 1 and 2.
- Pitchcott – Application to divert Footpath No 4 (part) Public Hearing was heard last week and the Inspectors decision is awaited.
- Iver – land at The Fields and The Clump application has been denied on grounds of estoppel.

John Coombe asked why Footpath No 27 was being extinguished. Claire Hudson explained that it is being transferred from Rights of Way to Highways. Due to the development of the area there is a footpath alongside which is being adopted.

Jonathan Clark took Members through the Strategic Access Update and the following comments were made:

- Jonathan referred to point 51 in the report regarding the HS2 Petitioning process and asked that if any groups wanted to align their Footpaths/Bridleways comments with those of Bucks County Council to let him know.

Joanne Taylor then took Members through the Rights of Way Operations Update and the following updates were provided:

- The outstanding issues were up slightly from last year from 1150 to 1300

Neil Harris commented that it was interesting that the Ploughing/cropping figures had increased. Joanne advised that this year letters had also been sent out to landowners.

John Elfes enquired if the number of outstanding issues would continue to increase. Joanne advised that due to resources the figures were likely to increase if the matrix which was currently in place remained the same. She said that this was an item on the agenda for discussion. Glyn Thomas raised concern that the LAF had previously highlighted concern over the increase in outstanding issues and that BCC had also since reduced the Rights of Way budget.

Alan Lambourne also highlighted that the number of volunteering hours had doubled

since last year. He said that if volunteers did not commit so many hours the number of outstanding issues would be much higher. Joanne said that she suspected that there were some unrecorded volunteer hours from last year's data and said she believed they were only up slightly from last year.

Joanne advised that Parish Councils had been contacted regarding clearance works and said that smaller Parishes could consider creating a cluster with neighbouring Parish Councils. Richard Pushman advised that he was a member of the Bucks Association of Local Councils (BALC) and said that he could draw attention to this offer.

8. PRIORITY MATRIX

Members had received the Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Problem Management Matrix report.

Joanne took Members through the report and the following comments were made:

- Alan said that changing the matrix did not appear to change anything on the ground and that the proposed changes would only serve the purpose of making the figures look better.
- Glyn asked for clarification in how the Council reached the figure of £120k in relation to the budget reduction. He said that surely the Council would have decided what priorities they could and couldn't do when arriving at the £120k figure. The Chairman said that he would ask for clarification in how the £120k figure was determined. **ACTION: JE**
- The Chairman said that to change the matrix would not make any difference to the works and would serve no purpose except to hide the effect of the budget cuts.

Members agreed that the Problem Management Matrix targets should remain as they are so that it is possible to benchmark performance in the future.

9. LAF MEMBERS REPORT

Members had received the LAF Members report.

The Chairman advised that he had met with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment and said that in hindsight perhaps they hadn't pressed hard enough to ascertain who in BCC was responsible for managing and ensuring the contract was delivered. He suggested that perhaps the meeting should be an annual event.

Jonathan advised that he had been in touch with the Highways Department regarding the parcel of common land called Pinner Green, who indicated that the fence may impact on the Highway and that if it is it would be impeding Highway law. The Highways department will look at the barbed wire fencing and make a decision whether it is on the highway or not. Jonathan then asked Members want action if any they wanted to take in relation to the common land. Members agreed that they wanted the barbed wire and fence posts to be removed.

Jonathan asked Members to amend paragraph 8 to read 'A new bridleway' not 'A new cycle route', with regard to a proposed new route creation along the disused railway line between Bourne End to Wooburn. The Chairman suggested that members might like to visit the site. Chris Hurworth said that the LAF should support the route. He highlighted that there was also a proposed housing development being built in the same area.

Glyn Thomas asked if horses could get on and off the route both ends and Jonathan said he would look into this.

Richard Pushman asked about the conflict of pedestrians and cyclists. He said that the proposal was for the route to be a fairly straight run and tarmacked. He asked if it would be possible for the path to be made wider or for bumps to be included as he was worried that pedestrians may get knocked over. The Chairman asked if the path needed to be tarmacked or whether it could be gravel as this would slow down cyclists.

The LAF agreed to support the route taking into account the concerns about horses getting on and off the route safely and the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chris Hurworth advised that there was a proposal for a Solar Farm outside the Thame/Kingsey area. He said that there are a number of dead end footpaths and asked if the LAF wanted to suggest to the landowner that if planning permission is granted the footpaths be extended. Glyn asked if Section 106 monies could be used for footpaths. Jonathan said he would look into this.

11. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury, 10am Wednesday 2nd July 2014

Chairman



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

Date: 2 July 2014

Title: Rights of Way Team update

Authors: Claire Hudson, Jonathan Clark, Joanne Taylor

Contact Officer: Sharon Griffin (01296 383691)

A. DEFINITIVE MAP UPDATE (CLAIRE HUDSON)

Resources Appraisal **Definitive Map investigations are statutory duties for the Council, funded through Place Service revenue budgets. Costs associated with Public Path Orders are, for the most part, recovered from applicants.**

The Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to apprise LAF Members of the outstanding Definitive Map caseload undertaken by the Definitive Map Team and provide an update for matters previously considered by the Rights of Way Committee.

DEFINITIVE MAP APPLICATIONS DETERMINED BY COMMITTEE / ORDERS MADE

1. **Great Missenden** – upgrading of Public Bridleways Nos. 52 and 55 (part) to Public Byways Open to All Traffic. The application was rejected by the Committee on 14 July 2006. The applicant appealed the decision and the Council was directed by the Secretary of State to make an Order for Byway status. An Order was made and advertised. Objections to the Order were received and the matter was referred back to the Secretary of State for determination. The County Council did not support the confirmation of the Orders. Public Inquiry held; Orders subsequently confirmed with modifications which were advertised between 15 January and 12 February 2014. **Written representations were requested in relation to the objections to the modifications. We await further instruction from the Secretary of State.**

2. **Great Missenden/Wendover** – upgrading Public Bridleways No. 1 Great Missenden and Nos. 45 and 61 Wendover to Public Byways Open to All Traffic. The application was rejected by the Committee on 14 July 2006. The applicant appealed the decision and the Council was directed by the Secretary of State to make an Order for Byway status. An Order was made and advertised. Objections to the Order were received and the matter referred back to the Secretary of State for determination. The County Council did not support the confirmation of the Orders. Public Inquiry held; Orders subsequently confirmed with modifications (including bridleway 45 Wendover being excluded) which were advertised between 15 January and 12 February 2014. **Written representations were requested in relation to the objections to the modifications. We await further instruction from the Secretary of State.**

3. **Taplow** – application to record the route from River Road to Amerden Lane as Public Bridleway. The application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 7 December 2011. An Order was subsequently made on 18 June 2012; objections received and Order referred to Secretary of State but it was deemed to be flawed. A new Order was made and advertised. **Objections to the Order have been received and the matter has been referred to the Secretary of State for determination. A public inquiry will be held on 27 August 2014.**
4. **High Wycombe** – application to record the route from Burnham Close to Whitelands Road, High Wycombe as Public Footpath. This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 21 January 2013. An Order was made on 15th April 2013. Objections have been received and the matter has been referred to the Secretary of State for determination. **A public inquiry will be held on 1 October 2014.**
5. **Lower Winchendon** – application to record the route from Public Footpath No 10b to Public Footpath No. 3, Cuddington as Public Footpath. **This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2014. An Order is in the process of being made and advertised.**
6. **Radnage** – drafting error of Public Bridleway No. 3. Committee are requested to decide whether on the balance of probabilities, whether there is sufficient evidence to suggest that bridleway 3 is shown incorrectly on the Definitive Map and should be modified so that it continues along an enclosed track to the County Boundary with Oxfordshire. **This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2014. An Order has been made and was advertised until 13 June. No objections have been received therefore the Order will be confirmed.**

B. DEFINITIVE MAP APPLICATIONS TO BE INVESTIGATED AND REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

7. **Westbury (Route 1)** – application to record the route from Footpath No 14, Westbury (at the Oxfordshire county boundary) to Public Footpath No 11, Westbury as Public Footpath. The route is 90% in Oxfordshire. Discussions were held with Oxfordshire County Council with a view to their entering into an Agency Agreement with us in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable us to undertake investigations on their behalf. **An Agency Agreement could not be agreed. Buckinghamshire officers are therefore only investigating the section within Buckinghamshire’s boundary. Committee to make a decision on this case during its meeting of 9 July 2014.**
8. **Westbury (Route 2)** – application to record the route from Footpath No 14, Westbury (at the Oxfordshire county boundary) to the route referred to in (9) below as Public Footpath. This route is entirely in Oxfordshire. Discussions were held with Oxfordshire County Council with a view to their entering into an Agency Agreement with us in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable us to undertake investigations on their behalf. **An Agency Agreement could not be agreed. This application will be investigated by Oxfordshire County Council.**
9. **Westbury (Route 3)** – application to record the route from the junctions of Footpath No 303, Mixbury, Oxfordshire to Fulwell Road, Westbury as Public Bridleway. Discussions were held with Oxfordshire County Council with a view to their entering into an Agency Agreement with us in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable us to undertake investigations on their behalf. **An Agency Agreement could not be agreed. Buckinghamshire officers are therefore only investigating the section within Buckinghamshire’s boundary. Committee to make a decision on this case during its meeting of 9 July 2014.**

10. **Iver** – application to record various routes across The Fields and The Clump, Iver as Public Footpaths. **Committee to make a decision on this case during its meeting of 9 July 2014.**
11. **Chepping Wycombe** – application to record the route from Elmshott Close to King's Wood as Public Footpath. **Investigation not started.**
12. **Bledlow** – application to record the route from Footpath No 49 to Bridleway No 55 as public footpath. **Investigation not started.**
13. **Edgcott** – application to record Lawn House Lane as a Public Footpath to Public Footpath 11 Edgcott. **Investigation not started.**
14. **Iver** – application to record route from Grange Way to Colne Orchard as a Public Footpath. **Investigation not started.**
15. **Hedgerley** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 14 to public bridleway status based on historical evidence. **Investigation not started.**
16. **Bledlow** – application to investigate the alignment of Public Footpath 52. **Investigation not started.**

C. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

17. **Ashley Green** – Application to divert Footpath No 2B Ashley Green. **Informal consultation currently being carried out.**
18. **Aylesbury** – Application to extinguish Footpath No 7(part) and Footpath 8 (part). Objections have been received to the Order. Referred to the Secretary of State for determination. **To be determined by written representations, currently awaiting further direction from the Secretary of State.**
19. **Coleshill** – Application to divert Footpath No 11(F) part. Order made and no objection received. Landowner works awaiting completion and then Order will be confirmed.
20. **Dinton with Ford and Upton** – Application to divert Footpath 15. **Awaiting made Order from Legal Services.**
21. **Ellesborough** - Application to divert footpaths Nos.3 and 9 Ellesborough. **Order made and confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
22. **Gawcott with Lenborough** – Diversion of Footpath No. 12. **Made Order is currently being advertised.**
23. **Great Marlow** – Application to divert Footpath No. 21 and Bridleway No. 52. **Informal consultation currently being carried out.**
24. **High Wycombe** – Application to extinguish Footpath No. 27. Wycombe District Council planning matter. Order made and confirmed by WDC. Awaiting developer works.
25. **Marsworth** – Application to divert Footpath No. 3. Order made on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council and no objections received. Awaiting landowner works and then Order will be confirmed.
26. **Medmenham** – Application to divert Footpath No. 15. **Informal consultation carried out, landowner to advise whether they would like to proceed.**

27. **Oving** – Application to divert Footpath No.1 Oving. Informal consultation completed. No objections. Order to be made. **Order confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
28. **Pitchcott** – Application to divert Footpath No 4 (part). Order made and objections received. **Secretary of State confirmed Order following a Public Hearing. Awaiting completion of works before Order can be certified.**
29. **Quainton** – Application to divert Bridleway No 21. **Awaiting completion of works before Order can be confirmed.**
30. **Steeple Claydon** – Application to divert Footpath No 6. **Order Made. ON HOLD until further notice.**
31. **Stokenchurch** – Application to divert Footpath No. 28. **Investigations not started.**
32. **Swanbourne** – Application to divert Footpath No. 12. **Awaiting approval of route from Area Rights of Way Officer.**
33. **Waddesdon** – Application to divert Public Footpath No 13(part) Waddesdon. Order made and in formal objection period. No objections received. **Order confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
34. **Whitchurch** – Application to extinguish Footpath No 4 (part). **Order made and confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
35. **Winslow** – Application to extinguish Footpath No 5. Order made and no objections received. **Awaiting landowner works ahead of confirmation.**

D. PUBLIC PATH CREATION AGREEMENTS

36. **Edgcott** – Bridleway Creation (BCC Land). **Creation Agreement completed – awaiting works on the ground.**
37. **Edgcott** – Bridleway Creation (ERC Land). **Awaiting go ahead from ERC to proceed.**
38. **Westcott** - Footpath Creation. **Landowner has decided not to dedicate. CASE CLOSED.**
39. **Gerrards Cross** – Footpath Creation. **Creation Agreement signed. CASE CLOSED.**

E. VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATIONS

40. **Iver** – land at The Fields and The Clump. **The application was refused on the basis of estoppel. CASE CLOSED.**
41. **Hughenden** – land at The Field, Bryants Bottom. Application advertised and objections received. **A Public Inquiry has been organised for 4 – 6 August 2014.**
42. **Beaconsfield** – voluntary registration of the land at Hampden Hill. **Awaiting ownership confirmation from Town Council.**
43. **High Wycombe** – land at Meadow Close, Wycombe Marsh. **The application is currently being investigated.**
44. **Wooburn** – land off Cherwell Road, Bourne End. **Waiting investigation.**

For further information please contact: Helen Francis on 01296 387123.

B. STRATEGIC ACCESS UPDATE (JONATHAN CLARK)

45. The planning process is one lever through which the integrity of rights of way and access networks can be protected and maintained, but also enhanced and upgraded through private developer funding. Opportunities in this area can only increase against the background of an economic recovery and increasing development pressure in the county, so successfully shaping planning policy and influencing individual applications is becoming important. A total of 174 planning applications affecting rights of way were commented upon in the financial year to 1st April 2014.
46. We are now in the preliminary stages of parliamentary petitioning and a total of 1,925 representations are available to view online. The Select Committee opens in July 2014 to hear open statements from HS2 and will start to hear from petitioners in Birmingham, working in a southerly direction towards London.
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cmhs2/petitions/petcontents.htm>
47. Petitions include papers from the Ramblers (No. 5), Chilterns Conservation Board (No. 415) and Buckinghamshire county council (No. 520). Rights of way are mentioned in only one general paragraph of the county response, but more details have been tabulated and sent to HS2 prior to a further meeting on 3rd June 2014 aiming to resolve outstanding issues. For example, much of the strategic network needs further links beyond bridge crossings, and we have included several general principles, including on highlighted by the LAF, to construct footways alongside roads forming rights of way diversion routes. A number of points re-iterate crossings already agreed in order that other petitions do not trump an agreed crossing and result in their subsequent removal.
48. The East West Rail Project aims to re-establish rail passenger services between Oxford, Bletchley and Bicester, then south to Aylesbury, introducing a new station at Winslow. Services are planned to start in March 2019. It means that sustainable transport access will be available from Milton Keynes, Bicester and Oxford for visitors to access stations between Aylesbury and Denham and will open up more possibilities of walking between stations. For example, on the Ridgeway between Tring and Princes Risborough, returning north home by train.
49. Three further meetings with Network Rail have taken place since March 2014 to discuss their ambition of transferring the 26 'at grade' crossings to nearby existing bridges or underpass crossings (or new structures) in order to improve safety. A community consultation will commence this year and a preliminary meeting has taken place between Network Rail and the Ramblers. There is a stakeholders meeting to which the LAF chairman is invited on 2nd July 2014 and subsequent meetings will take place on 16th July 2014, 20th Aug 2014 15th Oct 2014, 12th Nov 2014 and 17th Dec 2014 at Network Rail's office in Milton Keynes.
50. We have also been approached to look at 16 crossings on the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury branch line, which borders the Chiltern's AONB boundary. This is also part of the East West Rail project with the aim of increasing passenger services and using the route for freight (of around 18 trains per day) during HS2's construction.
51. There have been 9 new Donate-a-Gate since March 2014. The scheme, is in its 8th year, has reached the 300th donor and shortly the 400th gate will be installed. This equates to private funding of £100, 000 into the Chiltern's walking network and has contributed greatly to improving access for the less mobile and supporting the stile-free walks initiative. The only barrier to the project would appear to be the lack of stiles to replace in some areas, such as Amersham and the Chess Valley, an indication in itself of the scheme's success.

52. One source of local funding for rights of way projects can be obtained through respective Local Area Forums (LAFs) across the county. These bodies aim to strengthen local democratic accountability by empowering elected councillors to take decisions, and shape service delivery and council priorities in local community areas. Each LAF has a set of priorities, outlined within Local Area Plans, some of which include improving rights of way and promoting cycling and walking. The Haddenham Walking Group used their successful £10K bid to replace 28 stiles on the Wychert Way (and Outer Aylesbury Ring with additional funding from the Ramblers), and this will be launched with a celebratory walk on the evening of 27th June 2014 from Haddenham (Church End) village green at 5.45pm. Further information, and to download your Local Area Plan, is on the county website: <http://www.bucksc.gov.uk/community/local-areas/>

C. RIGHTS OF WAY OPERATIONS UPDATE (JOANNE TAYLOR)

53. A 'Summary of Works' is attached to this report in Appendix 1, outlining work carried out by the Rights of Way Operations Team between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2014.

54. The team currently has 1.4 FTE vacancies for Assistant Rights of Way Officers. Unfortunately, recruitment for these posts has been delayed by a number of factors, including a re-organisation of the group and the transfer of staff into Ringway Jacobs. I also have to report that Phil Turner (Area Rights of Way Officer) will be leaving the Rights of Way Operations Team at the beginning of July 2014 to join the Definitive Map Team. Phil's vacant post is currently being circulated for recruitment within the Ringway Jacobs Group, and if there are no applications internally then both the Assistant and the Area Posts will be advertised externally. I hope that by the time of the next meeting the team will be settled with all posts filled.

55. At the last meeting of the Forum in March 2014, it was reported that the interim results for the May 2013 BVPI survey were available and we were waiting to input the results of the November 2013 data. This has now been completed and the results are below, indicating the overall paths 'easy to use' is better than expected from the assessment of the earlier May results.

56. BVPI 2013 – Survey Results 5% figure May/November 2013

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| 80% Paths Easy to use | Expected Target 2013 | 76 – 84% |
| 96% Signs on Roadside | Expected Target 2013 | 94 – 98% |
| 92% Structures Easy to use | Expected Target 2013 | 90 – 95% |

57. The Rights of Way Operations Business Plan for this financial year (2014-2015) has Key Performance Indicators outlined below (yet to be agreed by the client).

| Title | Lower | Expected |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Footpaths etc. easy to use by members of public | 65% | 70% |
| Structures on rights of way easy to use according to BVPI 178 criteria | 80% | 88% |
| Number of structures removed/altered to improve mobility/accessibility | 50 | 70 |
| Public RoW signposted in accordance with CA 1968 s27 | 80% | 88% |
| % of enforcement issues resolved within matrix targets | 40% | 50% |
| Volunteering Hours for Place reporting | 0 | 1800 |

- 58 Parish Paths Clearance Fund Update. Members of the Forum will recall that funding has been made available by the county council to enable parish councils to benefit from being able to undertake and manage path clearance work. The money is in the form of a grant to parish councils who wish to employ their own contractors to undertake this work themselves.
- 59 The grant to the parish council will be equivalent to the current annual cost for the county council to cut paths in the participating parishes. It will be paid to any parish council wishing to become involved and who commits to undertaking the annual clearance works usually carried out by the county council. A parish council may also wish to contribute additional money either to cover the cost of clearing additional paths not included on the county council's annual clearance schedule or to increase the frequency of cuts on specific paths thereby improving the quality of the local path network and encouraging greater use of it.
- 60 All parishes with scheduled annual clearance were notified of the scheme in February and March 2014, and most participating parishes have now signed agreements. I can confirm 22 parishes will have signed up to the scheme.
- 61 A number of surface repair works have been identified, hopefully to be done this financial year using capital funding, and I will have some feedback on specifics and any completed projects for the next meeting.

Buckinghamshire County Council - Rights of Way

Summary of Maintenance Carried Out Between 1/04/13 and 31/03/14

| TYPE | DESCRIPTION | NORTH+SOUTH | NORTH+SOUTH |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | | Aprl - March 12 | Aprl-Mar 13 |
| Alignment | Path Off Line - resolved issue | 18 | 13 |
| Clearance | Clearance - carried out-jobs/km | 290k/517 | 313k/1123 |
| Bridge | Installed or repaired | 46 | 40 |
| Finger/post | Installed or repaired | 266 | 277 |
| Fly Tipping | Fly Tipping - removed | 12 | 31 |
| Gate | Gate repaired or installed | 108 | 92 |
| Intimidation + animal | Intimidation - resolved | 11 | 17 |
| Intimidating sign | Misleading Sign - removed | 2 | 8 |
| Obstruction - resolved | Barbed wire | 6 | 3 |
| Obstruction - resolved | Barrier - Fencing, wall or other | 87 | 76 |
| Obstruction - resolved | Electric fence | 10 | 10 |
| Obstruction - removed | Fallen Tree | 218 | 323 |
| Obstruction - resolved | Ploughing and Cropping | 58 | 88 |
| Other | Delivery of materials | 53 | 44 |
| Other | Miscellaneous issues resolved | 48 | 59 |
| Stile | Installed or repaired | 151 | 155 |
| Stile | Stile To Gap | 16 | 21 |
| Stile | Stile To KG | 61 | 83 |
| Stile | Stile To PG | 63 | 49 |
| Terrain | Path Erosion - resolved | 8 | 5 |
| Terrain | Bank Steps | 13 | 13 |
| Terrain | Path Surface problem resolved | 52 | 73 |
| Waymark Post | Installed/Repaired | 165 | 165 |
| Authorisation | New Structure HA80 sec 147 | 2 | 2 |
| Consultations | All Planning Applications | 225 | 174 |
| Volunteer Hours | The Chiltern Society | 945 _{part records} | 2039 |
| Volunteer Hours | RA Only | | |
| Improvements | To aid mobility access | 248 | 245 |
| 5% Survey Results | Paths Rated easy to use | 80% | 80% |
| 5% Survey Results | Structures rated easy to use | 97% | 92% |
| 5% Survey Results | Routes with Roadside Signs | 95% | 96% |
| Number on Database | No. of Job Sheets issued | 1631 | 1886 |
| Number on Database | Av. time to complete a site inst | 38 days | 36 days |
| Number on Database | No. of issues os 31/03/12 | 799 | |
| Number on Database | No. of issues os 31/03/13 | | 1150 |
| Number on Database | No. of Issues os 31/03/14 | | 1085 |
| Number on Database | No. of Issues os 17/06/14 | | 1261 |
| % of issues in targ time | Cat. C enforcement issues | no data | 81% |



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

Date: 2 July 2014

Title: LAF Members' Report

Author: Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access

Contact Officer: Sharon Griffin (01296 383691)

Open Access

- 1 A parcel of common land called Pinner Green (HP5 1UL) has been fenced off along the west side of Blackwell Hall Lane, Latimer. Appendix 1 outlines the extent of the common land in pink and fencing in bold red. Pinner Green was part of the Ley Hill Common exemption order. The land was exempt from registration under the Commons Registration Act 1965 because it was regulated by schemes under the Commons Act 1899. Section 38 of the 2006 Act as well as applying to all land registered as common under the 1965 Commons Registration Act also covered land subject to a scheme of management under the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866 or the Commons Act 1899.

- 2 There has been a legal requirement to obtain Secretary of State consent to carry out fencing or other works that prevent or impede access on common land since 1925 (Law of Property Act section 194). This requirement was a response to pressure from the Commons Preservation Society (now the Open Spaces Society) to prevent the continuing loss of common land through inclosure and the extinguishment of common rights. This was strengthened by section 38 Commons Act 2006. In 1966 the land was owned by Amersham Rural District Council which is now Chiltern District Council. We are at present seeking current land ownership details as the land has no title with Lane Registry.

Ridgeway & Thames Path National Trails

- 3 Natural England have agreed to provide a grant of 75% towards the management and promotional costs for national trails, with a condition that management arrangements are reviewed and a new membership is created with a broader range of partners. A new Ridgeway delivery framework is being developed by consultants from the Kent Downs AONB and their report is expected to be returned to the Management Group by the end of June 2014.

- 4 The chairman attended a Ridgeway Workshop at Field Farm, Lewknor on 15th May 2014. The purpose was to bring together those with a shared interest in the management and promotion of the Ridgeway in the Chilterns to discuss issues, identify possible joint working and have a chance to share knowledge and steer the consultants. The group discussed issues such as signage to local attractions; information and interpretation; hedges and vegetation obscuring views; more scenic alternative routes; and poor surfaces. The discussions were used to feed into the delivery framework being developed by the Kent Downs AONB consultants.

Cycling

- 5 A new cycle route is being proposed between Bourne End and Wooburn, utilizing the disused railway line (see map in Appendix 8) and views were sought from the LAF at the March 2014 meeting. A new route here would allow cyclists and horse riders to avoid the busy road and connect their onward journeys on quieter local roads. Negotiations are ongoing between Sustrans and the landowner to agree compensation if a new public route is created, but it seems likely a report will be going to an extra ordinary meeting of the Rights of Way Committee on 10th September 2014 seeking authority to use compulsory powers under s.26 Highways Act 1980. It is a public meeting so any members wishing to attend are welcome.

Natural England correspondence

- 6 The Buckinghamshire LAF Annual Report for 2013/14 was due for submission to Natural England on 30th June 2014.

Conferences

- 7 The Chilterns Conservation Board Annual Access Conference was held this year on 19th June 2014, 9.30am at St Catherine's Lane End, RG9 6NN, with a local site visit in the afternoon.
- 8 The South East Local Access Forum Conference was held on Tuesday 20th May 2014, Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ. Speakers included Steve Jenkinson on the management of dogs of the countryside, Dr Phil Wadey from the BHS on work toward the proposed 2026 rights of way claims deadline and Mark Weston on sharing multi user routes with horse riders.

LAF dates for 2014

- 9 The date of the next meeting is 5th November 2014.



